

## M E R C A T O R :

O R,

## Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Saturday, April 10. to Tuesday, April 13. 1714.

*It is not the English Wooll or Spanish Wooll going to France that is the Occasion of the Improvement of the French in Woollen-Manufactures.*

*But it is the Loading the English Goods with high Duties in France.*

*The Preambles to the Declarations, and Arrests of Council made in France for laying on those Duties, is always the Necessity for the good of their People.*

*Three Examples given of it.*

*No wonder their Manufactures improved, when ours were so loaded with Duties as to disable their coming to Market.*

*What shall we say to those who prevent here the taking off those Duties in France, and thereby continue the Improvements of France, and the Discouragements at home.*

**T**HAT keeping our Wooll at home would assist effectually to prevent the French Encrease in Woollen-Manufactures, the worst Enemy of our Commerce must acknowledge. None can be so brutishly dull as not to know, however they may not be honest enough to acknowledge, that it is English Wooll that makes the French imitate an English Manufacture to any Perfection. But this is not all.

To say they have Spanish Wooll, is to say nothing neither; because they have always had Spanish Wooll as cheap and as easily as they have now. So that this is not the Case neither.

If there is any thing then that gives the French an Advantage in Manufactures over the English, it must be something which occurs now that never happen'd before something, the Want of which prevented their Improving before, and this is obvious to any common Understanding.

They had Wooll from England and Wooll from Spain for Ages ago, time out of Mind; and had they had the same Oportunity that they have now, they would have the same Advantage; but it was impossible they could make the Goods then as well as they can now, or within a small Matter of it. But there was something in the way that could never be overcome but by what has happened since. The Case is very plain,

During the former Years of Trade with France, the English Woollen-Manufactures were freely Imported into France, paying a moderate Custom of about Ten per Cent. as per the Tariff of 1664. They were sold in such Quantities in France, and were so preferable to the best Goods the French could make so much Cheaper in Price in Proportion to their Goodness, and so much more substantial and durable in wearing, that in short

this was the Truth of the Case; The best of their own Goods would not Sell while the English Goods were to be had.

When the French King first applied himself to the Encouraging his Subjects in Improvements and Manufactures, the Commissaries and Officers, who he employ'd to direct those Encouragements, represented to His Majesty, That it was in vain to think of setting his Subjects upon Woollen-Manufactures, while the English Goods were allow'd to be Sold so Cheap; and therefore they pray'd that an additional Duty might be laid on all the English Woollen Goods that might take from them the advantageous Difference, which by their own Goodness they had over the French.

And it is observable, that the Introduction or Preamble to those Arrests of Council publish'd in France, which either raise the Duties of Importation upon English Manufactures, or moderate the Duties of Exportation upon their own Woollen Goods made in France, acknowledge the Reason of it to be as aforesaid, viz. The giving Encouragement to their own Manufactures, as follows, "The Zeal we have always had for the Encrease and Establishment of the Trade of our Subjects having obliged us to make a Reformation of our Custom:—and to settle a New Tarriff, &c. Vide Declaration du Roy, Apr. 18. 1667.

AGAIN, "The King being desirous for the Good and Advantage of his Subjects, to encrease the Trade and Manufactures of the Kingdom, that the Workmen and Undertakers of the said Manufactures may find Employment; His Majesty has Examin'd in his Council of Commerce, what will be most convenient to encrease the Trade of divers sorts of Merchandizes made in France—— Vide Arrest of the King's Council, Decemb. 24. 1701.

AGAIN,





AGAIN, "His Majesty continuing his Application for the Profit and Advantage of his Subjects in Matters of Trade—Vide Arrest of the King's Council, Sept. 6. 1701.

It is very convincing if these things are viewed with an Impartial Eye, to observe the Ground of all the Additions of Duties in France: The first of these, viz. *The King of France's Zeal for the Encrease and Establishment of the Trade of his Subjects*, was the laying on Twenty per Cent. upon the English Woollen-Manufactures more than they paid before. The Second, viz. *for the Encrease of the Manufactures in France, and the Employment of the People*, was the taking off or abating the Taxes formerly laid upon their own Goods; and the Third, viz. *His Majesty's continued Application for the Advantage of his Subjects in Trade*, was the entire Prohibition of the English Woollen-Manufactures.

These are undeniable Evidences of what is affirm'd above, (viz.) That the whole Improvement of the French in Woollen Manufactures, is brought to pass by their loading the English Woollen Manufacture with heavy Duties, that their own, which otherwise would never have sold, might go off.

It appears also, that notwithstanding such Duties were laid from time to time, yet that they were always found to be Ineffectual; and the goodness and fineness of the English Goods was always such, that however dear they were, yet the People would buy them rather than those of their own Country, if they were to be had; Till at last finding Doubling, Trebling, and Redoubling would not do, they were obliged to make a total Prohibition of all the English Woollen Manufacture in France.

Is it any wonder that their own Manufacture Encreased under such Advantages? And is it not an Evidence of the meanness of their Manufacture, after all their pretences of Improvement, that 50 per Cent. Duty was not sufficient to encourage their own, or to keep ours from the Market; but they were obliged to come at last to a total Prohibition?

Will any Man suggest, that the French Manufactures were as good as ours, when a Duty of 70 per Cent. upon ours was not found sufficient to exclude them, or sufficient to establish their own without entirely Prohibiting ours?

Having then the Doors shut against the English Trade, and the Poor People under an Arbitrary Command to wear their own Manufactures, can we be at a loss for a Reason why the French Improved in Woollen Manufactures? This was the way how it was done, and the only way; Neither could it have been done any other way, for as long as any English Woollen Manufactures could be had in France, at what Price soever, *Their own could not be Sold*; and it is worth observing, how as the French Manufacturers addressed the King to encourage their Manufactures, so the way

of that Encouragement was, that new Duties were always added to the English Goods: For example,

In the Tariff of 1664, the King of France, who, to set his People to Work on Woollen Manufactures, had advanced a Million of Livres out of the Treasury, to be employ'd in those Manufactures, as a Stock to assist and encourage his Subjects; consider'd also this part in the very first Tariff; where, tho' all other Goods paid but 5 per Cent. upon Importation, yet the Woollen Manufacture, was Tax'd at 10 per Cent. Duty: After this, within Three Years, (viz.) in 1667, the said Duties were Encreased by an addition of 20 per Cent, and then again by 20 per Cent. more, and in 1701 totally Prohibited.

The Case was plain; the Manufacturers found it was in vain for them to attempt any thing in the Woollen Trade, while the English Goods were upon even Terms; They knew the excellence of the English Manufactures, and that those they made in France could not come near them; so to encourage the French, and discourage the English Manufactures, they apply to the King, and obtain a Duty of 20 per Cent. to be laid on upon the English, thereby to lessen their Consumption of them, and prompt the Sale of their own.

Well! They found still that this would not do; and then, upon their second Application, they obtained an addition of 20 per Cent. more; then they thought the Market wholly their own, and indeed they might well think so, when our Spanish Cloth paid 120 Livres per Piece, and Serges 25 to 30 Livres. But all would not do yet; so acceptable was the English Cloths in France, or to say it all in a word, so mean, so unfit for use, so ordinary was the French Manufacture, that especially among Persons of Quality and Fashion, Nobody would wear it. But the English Broad-Cloth and Spanish Cloth was the wear, cost what it would.

They were then convinced, that nothing but a Prohibition of the English Manufactures would compleatly qualify them in France to carry on their own, and accordingly they obtained a Prohibition in the Year 1701.

This is the short History of the French Woollen Manufacturing; before they took this Method they could make nothing of it, but when there were no other Goods came to Market, no wonder that their own went off, when an Arbitrary Government commanded the Gentry to make shift with their own Manufactures, be they good or bad. No wonder they sold, and nothing else could have made them sell.

As this is the way by which they have shut out our Manufactures, so that shutting ours out of the Market has been the bringing their own in; and whenever those additional Duties are taken off, and the Tariff of 1664 restored, the English Woollen Manufacture will as certainly and effectually overthrow the French as their Exclusion raised them. What then shall we say to those who hinder the bringing so great a Work to pass?



LONDON: Printed for BENJ. TOOKE, at the Temple-Gate; and JOHN BARBER, on Lambeth-Hill. (Price 3 Half-pence.)